

# REFLECTIONS UPON A VANISHING SEASON

## Doings of Our Orchestras

A Concert a Day for Six Months—Little Time for Adequate Preparation—Growing Audiences and Waning Receipts—Nationalism in the Programmes

By H. E. Krehbiel

With a concert in Carnegie Hall this afternoon the Philharmonic Society will end the seventy-seventh year of its continuous activity and bring what may be called the official symphonic year to a close. It will not mark the conclusion of orchestral activity in New York, but we are obliged to make an arbitrary terminal date if we wish to attempt a summary of results, and the date is obviously suggested by the conclusion of the subscription concerts by the established orchestral organizations. As a matter of fact there are no longer seasonal beginnings and ends to the musical activities of New York, though there are points at which the professional reviewer knows that things of artistic pith and moment start and stop. We shall have another visit from the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Sunday night concert of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra (which is symphonic in structure and capacity even if it does not include symphonies in its programmes), will continue till the end of the opera season, there are some sporadic meetings of lesser bands still to be heard and a new Symphony Society which purports to be based partly on the plan on which the Philharmonic Society was created seventy-seven years ago, has announced its purpose to give four concerts in April and two in May. Then the summer concerts will begin. All these things must be left out of this hurried review, of course.

If there were some means of discovering how much orchestral music of the highest class a community can assimilate to its own good and that of the art it would be an easier task than it is to find a standard for the musical culture of New York in the records before us. But unfortunately no such standard exists. We cannot find it in the number of concerts given, nor in the estimated statistics of attendance, nor in the financial outcome. The first item can be arrived at with reasonable accuracy. Since the first week of October the people of New York have had opportunity to attend about 175 concerts of the kind which we have described, which, since only 172 days were compassed by the period, is an average of one concert a day. The stupendous figure which would result from an estimate of only 1,000 at each concert, speaks for itself concerning the second item. As for the third, that is locked up in the secret chambers of the mind, to which the managers only hold the keys. From the experiences of the past few years, however, it is safe to conclude that the financial results have been gratifying only to one class of persons concerned, that is, the performers who have received the money paid by the public, plus the contributions of the generous patrons whose benefactions have made the concerts possible. If we estimate this patriotic largesse at \$150,000, we think we are safely within the minimum. The indications of a larger material patronage than last year or the year before that have not been obvious to the observers familiar with the physiognomy of the paying audiences of the city, but the evidences of a larger free attendance have been many. Concerning that phase of local concert life we indulged in some observations a short time ago. It is a gratifying reflection only to one who can see growth of popular appreciation of high class music in the increasing number of persons who can be persuaded to give it a hearing which costs them nothing, or at best, only the war tax on the price of tickets. We are in no better position to judge of the orchestral situation in New York from this point of view than in any of the other cities which maintain such organizations—Boston, Chicago, Philadelphia and Cincinnati, for instance—but the impression derived from inquiries, made without pessimistic aims in the least, have forced upon us the conclusion that financially the results have been more discouraging than ever before. For this, two causes present themselves to even a moment's reflection. One is, the epidemic of sickness; the other, the increasing burdens laid upon the public by the war. The latter cause might have been modified in a degree had the multitude that were benefited by the increase in wages been of the concert-going class. But the prodigality which attended the increase in earnings of handcraftsmen and others did not disclose itself in the encouragement of art in any of its loftier phases. To drive to work in one's own car was more desirable than to hear a hundred symphonies. There is considerable stability in human nature. We question if angelic wings have put forth pin feathers in the chambers of the Paris peace commission—despite the length of the brooding process.

When Mr. Wilson has completed the regeneration of the world it may be possible to think in terms of pure art in considering the activities of our orchestras. As yet, ideal considerations are clogged with those that are materialistic, gross and earthy. We ought to eat to live and not live to eat and orchestras ought to give concerts to make music, not make music in order to give concerts. Idealists used to cherish the hope that an orchestra (one would be sufficient in New York) might be sufficiently endowed to give concerts of such excellence that its ministrations would be as full of sustenance for the soul as the manna which fell in the Wilderness was for the body of the wandering children of Israel.

But it seems as if the greater the endowment bestowed upon our orchestras for their maintenance the more narrow

concerts. Now, the more concerts musicians have to play the less time is at their disposal for preparation. Consequently, since they are supposed to be artists, not machines, the less excellent is their artistic output. We recognize this in the case of our opera and we ought also to recognize it in the case of orchestral players. When the efforts of conductors and players become merely mechanical labor they cease to be artistic and spiritually uplifting work.

Look now at the purely physical achievement of the Philharmonic Society. Since October 10, 1918, it has given 52 concerts in Carnegie Hall, 19 concerts in other cities, 9 concerts in Brooklyn and 3 private concerts of a more or less social nature for the dedication of its contributing members at the Waldorf-Astoria; in all, 83 concerts in 172 days. In this period it has visited Worcester, Springfield, Holyoke, Bridgeport, Providence, New Haven, Northampton and Manchester, in New England, and Wilkes-Barre and Reading, Penn.; Poughkeepsie, N. Y.; Detroit, Mich.; Fort Wayne, Ind.; Cleveland, Columbus, Toledo and Canton, Ohio. How many days of railroad travel this involved we shall not calculate, and we leave to the imagination of the reader to estimate the time left to the players for bodily and intellectual rest and refreshment between concerts. Obviously the men have been engaged in manufacturing music, not cultivating art very assiduously, for 172 days. And what is true of the Philharmonic Society is true in almost the same degree of the Symphony Society. Is there a wonder, irrespective of what one may think of the capacity of the men and their conductors, that discriminating listeners have complained of perfunctory, humdrum performances and even thought that there were greater opportunities for real aesthetic enjoyment when orchestral concerts were much less numerous?

We look at the record of the principal orchestras, confining ourselves, as seems proper and best, as far as possible, to their offerings at the subscription series, though some confusion is unavoidable because of the exigencies of this writing. The prejudices created by the war have left some traces, but they are incomparably smaller in the case of orchestral concerts than in song recitals, as we may learn if some day we take up the study of the concerts of scope. Here is a table showing the number of works (omitting vocal numbers) by composers of different nationalities, performed at the concerts of the Philharmonic and Symphony societies and the Boston and Philadelphia orchestras:

	Phil.	Sym.	Bos.	Phila.
French	8	24	21	4
German	26	34	11	8
Italian	1	3	0	0
American	2	2	0	0
Russian	12	2	3	0
Polish	1	1	0	0
English	2	0	1	0
Belgian	4	1	0	0
Norwegian	2	0	0	1
Hungarian	2	0	0	0
Finnish	1	0	0	0
Dutch	1	2	0	0

It must be borne in mind in comparing these lists that while the local organizations gave two score concerts each, and therefore had need of a large horizon of choice, the Boston orchestra gave ten concerts and the Philadelphia only five. We do not attempt to find any significance in the figures, nor do we attribute any political bias to the conductors in making the selections. There was no popular expression of prejudice whose source was worthy of consideration or which developed any influence in connection with these concerts.

The Philharmonic Society brought forward twelve novelties, of which Rubin Goldmark's "Requiem," Morris Harold's "Tone Poem," David Stanley Smith's Symphony in D, Reginald Sweet's "Orchestral Sketches," Gustav Strube's "Variations on an Original Theme" and Mortimer Wilson's suite, "From My Youth," were by either native or naturalized American composers. Mr. Humiston's suite in F-sharp minor ought to be mentioned, though it was not performed in the subscription series which we have made the basis of study. There were two novelties by British composers, "Life's Dance," by Delius, and "Verdun," by Sir Charles Villiers Stanford; one new piece by the Frenchman Ducas, "Sarrabande"; one by the Italian, Respighi, "The Fountains of Rome"; one by the Finn, Sibelius, Excerpts from the incidental music to "King Christian"; and one by the Norwegian, Sinding, Symphony No. 2. In the list of novelties brought forward by the Symphony Society were "The Angel of Death," by George W. Chadwick; "La Villanelle du Diable," by Charles Martin Loeffler, and an "Elegie Symphonique," by F. Borowski, Americans; "For a Dead Soldier" and "Faust et Hélène," by Lily Boulanger; a "Fantasy on Angevin Airs," by Lekeu; some incidental music from "La Basoche," by Messager; "Au Jardin de Marguerite," by Ducas; "Rances Tanageres," by Vidal, and "The Pipes of Pan," by Mouquet, Frenchmen; "War Pictures," by A. Casella, a symphonic suite by V. de Sabata, and a suite for viola d'amore, by Lorenzetti, Italians; a concerto for violoncello by Gersl and three "Old Belgian Folk Songs," by Arthur de Greef, Hollanders. The Philadelphia Orchestra introduced nothing new, and the Boston Orchestra only four compositions foreign to local programmes: "The Boat" by Debussy, French; "Incidental

## CONCERT GIVERS

### of the Week



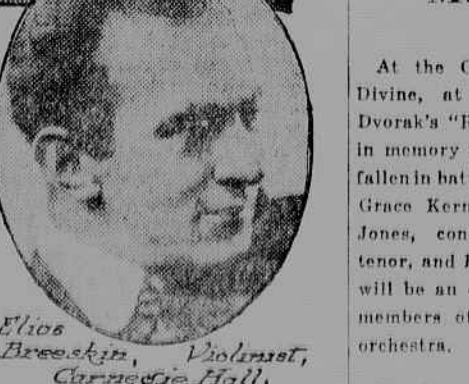
Augusta Tollefsen, Pianist, Aeolian Hall, Wednesday



Edward Morris, Pianist, Aeolian Hall, Thursday



Rose and Charlotte Presselle, Pianists, Aeolian Hall, Friday



Elias Breckin, Pianist, Carnegie Hall

## Music Notes

At the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, at 8 o'clock this evening, Dvorak's "Requiem" will be performed in memory of our soldiers and sailors fallen in battle. The soloists will be Miss Grace Kerns, soprano; Mrs. Benedict Jones, contralto; William Wheeler, tenor, and Edgar Schofield, bass. There will be an orchestra composed of fifty members of the New York Symphony orchestra.

Dr. Henry T. Fleck announces "La Bohème" for the seventh of the free series of "Operatic Nights" to be given on Thursday evening, April 4, at Hunter College auditorium, at 8:30. He will be assisted by Clemente de Mucchelli and several artists.

Miss Dorothy Jordan, who appeared here with the Chicago Opera Company, will make her debut in concert at the Hippodrome on Sunday evening, April 27.

A feature of the concert to be given by the Schola Cantorum this week will be the first performance in this country of parts of a new work by Rachmaninoff, a setting of the "All Night Vigil." This latest contribution to Russian church music by Mr. Rachmaninoff was finished in 1915, but has never been performed outside of Russia. The original Slavic text will be used.

The performance of the Greek tragedy, "Philoctetes in Aulis," with Walter Damosch's music, which was to have been given this spring, has been postponed until next season. Mr. Damosch will sail for France on Tuesday to look after the school for bandmasters and hand musicians which he founded at G. H. G. Chaumont, for the A. E. F., at the request of General Pershing, during his visit to France last summer and which has been active ever since.

The Musical Art Society, Frank Damosch, director, will resume activities during the season 1919-20. The concerts will be given in Carnegie Hall on Tuesday evening, December 16, and on Saturday afternoon, April 3.

The Paulist Chorists will give

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Spanish Theatre  
The Spanish Theatre Company announces that the opening attraction of the season at the Park Theatre will be "Mazurka," an opera in two acts by Amadeo Vives. It is followed by a

their final concert of the season at the Hippodrome next Sunday evening.

Kington, N. Y., has an amateur orchestra which it calls the Kington Symphony Society. It is in its sixth year, and is devoting itself to the education of the people of the town in good music. It recently gave a concert at which Schubert's B minor symphony and Weber's "Oberon" overture were performed, under the direction of George H. Miller. Children were admitted without pay to the public rehearsal. A second concert is to be given in May.

At the concert to be given by the Philadelphia Orchestra on April 8 for the benefit of the Vacation Association Gergei Rachmaninoff will play his concerto in C minor. Geraldine Farrar will sing groups of French and Russian songs. Rimsky-Korsakoff's "Scheherazade" will be one of the orchestral numbers.

Thomas Egan, the Irish tenor, recently returned to the concert stage, will appear in concert with his assisting artists at The Playhouse, Forty-eighth Street, east of Broadway, on Sunday evening, April 13, at 8:30 o'clock, under the auspices of New York Council, Knights of Columbus. Mr. Egan served during the war as director of war camp entertainments.

## Operas of the Week

A special performance for the benefit of the Emergency Fund will be given on Thursday afternoon. The bill will consist of the fourth act of "Il Trovatore" with Messrs. Randolph and Breslau and Messrs. Martinelli, Chalmers and Audisio; the second act and the third scene of the third act of "La Forza del Destino," with Messrs. Ponselle and Delaunoy and Messrs. Ponselle and Malatesta; and the third act of "Aida," with Messrs. Muzio and Howard and Messrs. Caruso, Whitehill and Rossi.

Other operas of the week, the last but two of the Metropolitan Opera season, will be, Monday, "L'Oracolo," with Messrs. Bontli, Altouss and Didi, and "Pagliacci," with Messrs. Caruso and Chalmers (his first appearance as Tonio) and Miss Muzio; Wednesday, "Madama Butterfly," with Miss Farrar and Messrs. Lazaro and Scotti; Thursday evening, "Il Barbiere di Siviglia," with Mrs. Barrientos and Messrs. Hackett, De Luca and Rothier; Friday, the "American Trip-tich," with the original cast; Saturday matinee, "Samson et Delila," with Mrs. Matzenauer and Mr. Caruso, and Saturday evening, at popular prices, "Thais," with Mrs. Farrar and Messrs. Diaz and Whitehill.

## To-night's "Opera Concert"

At to-night's "Opera Concert" Miss Paula Pardee, pianist, will play Grieg's concerto in A minor and Liszt's "Polonaise" in E major. Mme. Marguerite Namara will sing "Ah, fors è lui," from

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## Calendar for the Current Week

SUNDAY—Carnegie Hall, 3 p. m., concert by the Philharmonic Society; 8:15 p. m., concert by Alessandro Doli and others for the benefit of churches in Italy destroyed by the Germans; Aeolian Hall, 3 p. m., pianoforte recital by Serge Prokofiev; Hippodrome, 8:15 p. m., concert by Amelita Galli-Curci; Princess Theatre, 8:30 p. m., song recital by Mme. Ruano-Boguslaw; 8:15 p. m., song recital by Bertha Roversi; Great Hall of the College of the City of New York, 4 p. m., free organ recital by Samuel A. Baldwin; Brooklyn Academy of Music, 8 p. m., concert by the Irish Musical and Dramatic Club.

MONDAY—Aeolian Hall, 8:15 p. m., recital of sonatas for pianoforte and violin by Harold Bauer and Jacques Thibaud; Metropolitan Opera House, 8 p. m., Italian opera, "L'Oracolo" and "Pagliacci"; Park Theatre, 8 p. m. (and all the week), English operetta, by Gilbert and Sullivan.

TUESDAY—Aeolian Hall, 3 p. m., pianoforte recital by Harry Campson; 8:15 p. m., pianoforte recital of her own compositions, by Manna Zucca; Carnegie Hall, 8:15 p. m., violin recital by Elias Breckin; Great Hall of Cooper Union, 8:15 p. m., concert of North and Middle German folksongs.

WEDNESDAY—Aeolian Hall, 3 p. m., concert by Charlotte and Rose Presselle; Hotel Commodore, 8:30 p. m., Pershing Square Musical; Metropolitan Opera House, 8 p. m., Italian opera, "Madama Butterfly"; Metropolitan Opera House, 2 p. m., special performance of opera, mixed bill; 8 p. m., Italian opera, "Il Barbiere di Siviglia"; Horace Mann Auditorium, Columbia University, 8:15 p. m., concert by the Elsa Fischer Quartet.

FRIDAY—Aeolian Hall, 3 p. m., song recital by Rachel Morton-Harris; 8:15 p. m., concert by Michael Penha, violoncellist, and Mme. Schnabel-Tollefsen, pianoforte; Metropolitan Opera House, 8 p. m., opera by American composers, "The Legend," "The Temple Dancer" and "Shanewis."

SATURDAY—Aeolian Hall, 3 p. m., pianoforte recital by Oasip Gabrilowitch; Washington Irving High School 8:15 p. m., concert of chamber music by the Berkshire Quartet; Metropolitan Opera House, 2 p. m., French opera, "Samson et Dalila"; 8 p. m., French opera at popular prices, "Thais."

## Clef Club's Concert To-night

To-night will be Cartoonists' Night at the Selwyn Theatre, when artists from newspapers and magazines will attend the jazz concert by the Clef Club Orchestra, now in its tenth week of capacity success as a Sunday night musical attraction. Included on the list for this party are Rubie Goldberg, Tad Powers, Tom McNamara, Hershey, Frank Oppen, George McManus, Bud Fisher, Clifton Meek, Bud Conahan, W. E. Hill, Fontaine Fox, Rollin Kirby and others.

Special features of the programme will be Will Patrick, the Louisville banjo minstrel; George Hines, in a new syncopated drum solo; Williams and Covington, in a jazz trombone duet; the Clef Club Quartet, in a new group of Dixie camp meeting songs; Paul Parquette, in his levee character impersonations; the Tennessee Banjo Buddies, and Luther Blake, singing "Liza Jane" and other plantation favorites.

## Concerts to Come

April 6, Princess Theatre, costume recital by Frances Sonin. April 8, Princess Theatre, Carolyn Willard; Aeolian Hall, Winifred Byrd; John Corigliano. April 10, Aeolian Hall, Rose Levison; Louis Wins and Edouard Gendron. April 11, Carnegie Hall, first concert by the New Symphony Orchestra.

## AMUSEMENTS

Aeolian Hall, Fri. Eve. Apr. 4, at 8:30.  
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